

## **ESTABLISHING AND USING A SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL IN DISTRICT DECISION MAKING**

### **General Rationale:**

While a school's primary mission is educating children, children cannot learn effectively without the foundations of health and safety. A School Health Advisory Council (hereinafter referred to as "the Council") provides support for student achievement by facilitating communication, coordination and monitoring of health activities in the schools and by making recommendations to the Superintendent and/or School Board on health-related policies, protocols and programs.

### **Council Membership:**

- Determine the categories of individuals you would like represented on the Council (e.g., health care professionals, administrators, teachers, other school staff, board members, students, parents, community members) and the desired Council size. It should be kept to a manageable level. Keep in mind that additional individuals could serve in an advisory capacity to the Council on specific health-related topics.
- Include individuals on the Council who:
  - Have **professional knowledge and expertise** regarding health-related issues and the needs of children. For example, school nurse, medical professional, representatives of local public health agencies, social service agencies, community youth or health organizations.
  - Have an **interest** in school health and wellness issues.
  - Are **aware of community needs, interests, values and requirements** and are **representative of the school community**.
  - Will be **affected by decisions that are made** or will be **responsible for implementing school health-related policies and procedures** within the schools.
- Identify existing school health and safety-related committees or councils operating in the district in order to better coordinate, complement and build on existing activities and for possible Council membership. For example, the Human Growth and Development Advisory Committee, the District Wellness Committee, the Emergency Nursing Services Committee, the School Safety Committee. With the establishment of the Council, some or all of these committees could be dissolved and their tasks re-assigned to the Council.
- Determine the term lengths of Council members and rotate them in a way that protects the stability and consistency in operations of the Council.
- Identify an individual(s) to lead the Council and facilitate Council meetings and activities.

### **Council Roles and Responsibilities**

- Define purpose and authority of the Council prior to beginning work. The purpose of the Council is to serve in an advisory capacity to the Superintendent and/or School Board. **The Council does not have any final decision making authority in the district.**

### **Council Roles and Responsibilities** (con't)

- Determine specific roles and responsibilities of the Council within the district. Roles and responsibilities might include:
  - Assessing school health program needs and making recommendations for maintaining a safe and healthy school environment
  - Program planning, including curriculum development and review and staff training programs
  - Coordinating health care services, including access to health care and emergency response plans and protocols
  - Directing intervention activities, including initiating district policies and procedures on specific school health-related topics
  - Fiscal planning, including advocating for district and outside financial and resource support for school health programs
  - Information sharing and advocacy such as district, school and community health information collection; presentations on priority health topics; presentations on school health program impact on health and academic achievement; and identification of school health program strengths and weaknesses
  - Evaluation, accountability and quality control of school health-related programs and policies
  - Acting as a liaison between the school district and community health agencies and organizations
- Determine appropriate flow of communication between the Council and the Superintendent and/or School Board and members of the school community. The reporting procedures to be used by the Council for internal and external communication should be clearly stated.
- Clarify Council operating procedures, including frequency of meetings, agenda preparation and dissemination, and voting procedures.

### **Council Resources**

- The Council should be encouraged to draw upon a wide variety of resources both inside and outside the district when making school health-related policy and program recommendations. Recommendations should be based on appropriate research and supportive data.
- Resources should include not only available written materials but also individuals and organizations/agencies who can offer knowledge and expertise regarding specific health-related topics. For example, the Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Division of Public Health, local public health agencies, local hospitals/clinics, county UW-Extension staff, county health and family services staff, community coalitions/tasks forces.

### **Council Evaluation**

- Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the Council. Is the Council doing what it is supposed to be doing and how can it serve the schools and district more effectively?

**TEMPLATE TO USE IN ESTABLISHING AND  
USING SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL IN THE DISTRICT**

**I. Council Membership**

**A. Determine the categories of individuals to be represented on the Council:**

*(Keep in mind the purpose of the Council and its assigned roles and responsibilities. Include individuals knowledgeable about the subjects being discussed by the Council, interested in the subjects, those who may be affected by decisions that are made, and those who will be responsible for implementing school health-related policies and procedures within the schools.)*\_\_\_\_\_

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**B. Identify any existing school health and safety-related committees or councils operating in the district:** *(These committees/councils may include individuals you would like to include on the Council. They may be able to be dissolved and their tasks reassigned to the Council. Examples of such committees include, Human Growth and Development Advisory Committee, Wellness Committee, School Safety Committee)*

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**C. Determine how Council members will be appointed, their term lengths and who will lead Council meetings and activities:**

**How will Council members be appointed and by whom will they be appointed?** *(Will members be appointed in a similar manner as other advisory committees in the district, or in a different manner?)*\_\_\_\_\_

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**What term length will Council members be appointed to serve?** *(Term lengths should be rotated to protect the stability and consistency in operations of the Council)*

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**Who will chair the Council and facilitate Council meetings and activities?** *(Will the Council chair be designated at the time the Council is appointed or will the Council itself select a chair?)*\_\_\_\_\_

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## **II. Roles and Responsibilities of School Health Advisory Council**

- A. Define General Purpose and Authority of the Council:** *(Why is the district establishing a School Health Advisory Council and how will it be used in district decision making? What authority does the Council have within the district? Remember that the Council is to serve in an advisory capacity to the Superintendent and/or School Board and does not have any final decision making authority in the district.)*

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- B. Determine specific roles and responsibilities of the Council within the district:** *(What specific tasks will be assigned to the Council? Will the Council deal with all health-related issues confronting the schools, or will its focus be more narrow?)*

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- C. Determine how Council reports and recommendations will be made to the Superintendent and/or School Board and the appropriate flow of communication between the Council and members of the school community:** *(Will reports be required to be made on regular basis regarding Council activities or only when the Council has specific recommendations to make regarding school health-related policies, programs or activities?)*

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- D. Clarify Council Operating Procedures (e.g., frequency of meetings, agenda preparation and dissemination, voting procedures)** *(Will these procedures be clarified at the time of Council appointment or will the Council itself determine its operating procedures?)*

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**III. Council Resources**

**What resources will the Council have access to when conducting Council activities and when making school health-related policy and program recommendations for the district?** *(Identify any known resources that may be helpful to the Council when performing their assigned tasks and in addressing specific school health-related topics (e.g., alcohol and other drug use, asthma management in the schools, food allergies, human growth and development instruction, communicable disease control, emergency response plans, student nutrition and physical activity))*

**District resources:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Community resources:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Other resources:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**IV. Council Evaluation**

**Provide for an evaluation of the Council’s performance in relation to its assigned tasks and applicable district policy.** *(Will the Council itself be required to evaluate its performance on a regular basis and to include information regarding the evaluation in reports to the Superintendent/Board, or will the Council’s performance be evaluated on a regular basis by the Superintendent and/or School Board?)* \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Sample School Board Policy**

### **SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

In an effort to provide safe and healthy school environments and to address school health-related issues in a systematic manner, the School Board supports the establishment and use of a School Health Advisory Council in the District. The general purpose of the Council is to study, research, discuss and make recommendations to the Superintendent and School Board regarding school health-related policies, programs and activities. *{If a district wants to list the specific roles and responsibilities of the School Health Advisory Council in school board policy, they should be listed following this paragraph.}*

The School Health Advisory Council shall serve in an advisory capacity only and shall have no power to take action whatsoever or to commit the District to any course of action except as specifically directed by the Superintendent or Board.

The School Health Advisory Council shall be appointed by the Superintendent and include the school nurse (or public health nurse serving the school); representation from the teaching staff, school administration, pupil services staff and school support staff; and, other individuals from the school and community with knowledge and expertise regarding health-related issues and the needs of children. The Superintendent may also appoint parent, student and other representatives to the Council as he/she deems appropriate. Membership shall be set up on a rotation basis so as to protect stability and consistency in operations of the Council.

The Superintendent shall ensure that Council members are informed regarding the specific roles and responsibilities of the Council and its relationship to the Board and administration, any limitations on the work of the Council, and any operating and reporting procedures that must be followed.

The School Health Advisory Council shall report periodically to the Superintendent regarding Council activities. Council recommendations for school health policies, programs and activities shall be made to the Superintendent in writing. Any recommendations requiring Board action (e.g., policy changes) shall be referred to the Board. All recommendations made by the School Health Advisory Council shall be based upon appropriate research and supportive data.